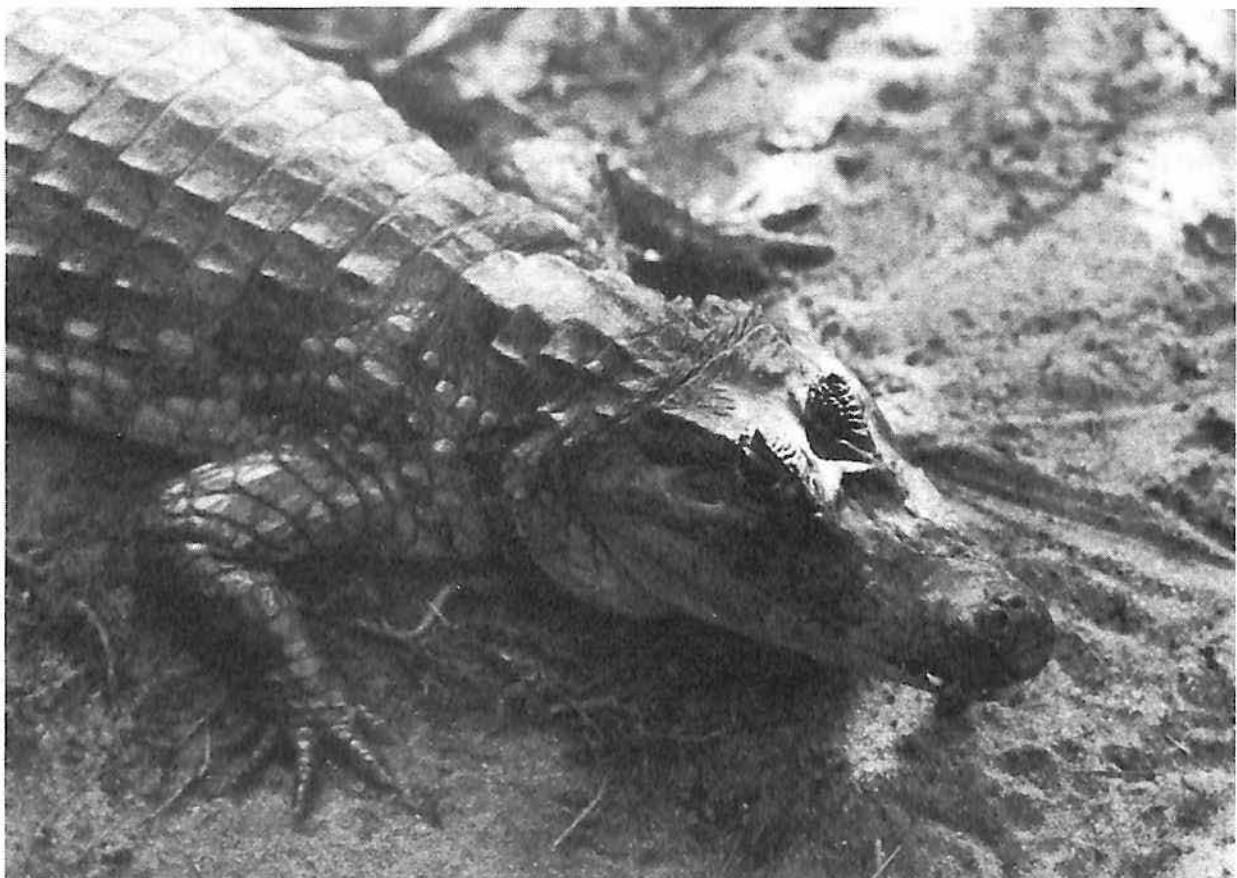


YOUTH NEWSLETTER

No. 9 November 1982

Youth Desk
Lutheran World Federation



I WONDER WHETHER MY YOUTH NEWSLETTER ARRIVED TODAY?

(See last page)

EDITORIAL:

Youth participation - WHO?

When young people are invited to attend LWF conferences and meetings, how is it possible to ensure that those selected are an active part of the youth constituency and not just selected because of "good connections"?

This is a vital question - especially at this stage when there is a genuine hope that more youth will be involved in the LWF programs. One youth who was a delegate to the peace conference in Chavanod describes the present situation as a "system of casual appointment by patronage".

It has to be admitted that, with the lack of coordination and the limited number of people involved, one could hardly expect a more sophisticated selection procedure to develop. However, with the new commitment on the part of the LWF - which also includes the churches - to involve more young people in the programs, it is extremely necessary to start working toward a "process of advertising, application and selection of suitable candidates".

As for the LWF offices in Geneva, in particular the Youth Desk, this means that churches and national committees have to receive requests for youth in time to ensure that such a process of selection is possible. So far, the youth coordinator has been painfully aware that this was not always the case; the choice has often been to try and get youth involved at a late stage or to not get any involved at all. It seemed better to choose the first alternative in order to "get things going" in youth involvement.

As the Youth Desk, in cooperation with other departments, overcomes such initial (hopefully only initial!) problems, it should be possible to give more time for selection. But it must be stressed that sometimes, for many different reasons of which the LWF is not always in control, the time becomes shorter than anticipated. There may be bureaucratic delays (even outside the LWF bureaucracy) for example in ensuring necessary permissions to go ahead with a program as planned and prepared. However, the normal situation should be that ample time can be given so that selection of participants is fair.

This will also require the cooperation of churches and national committees. It will require first of all, that they refer the requests for youth participation to their related youth/student organisations or youth departments/committees, and then wait for the nominations to be submitted before decisions are made. Such nominations should also be treated as nominations having the authority of the youth who are to be represented, and should therefore be felt as binding by the decision making bodies.

This would also require a certain degree of discipline on the part of the youth/student organisations or departments - especially by nominating their candidates without unnecessary lengthy selection processes, thus keeping within necessary time limits which may not allow for an ideal democratic exercise at every level of the organisation. But it would mean a big step towards a situation where those selected would really be representatives of the youth constituency.

The Youth Desk is presently trying to set up a list of youth organisations/departments/committees and student organisations which would receive copies of letters to churches/national committees about youth participation and other youth related matters. The sharing of copies should speed up the selection process in some cases and hopefully encourage more contact between youth organisations and churches/national committees.

PEACE CONFERENCE IN CHAVANOD

Cooperation between the Department of Studies and the Youth Desk made it possible to also invite some young people to attend the conference on peace efforts that was held in Chavanod, France July 5-12, 1982. The youths represented Canada, US, Sweden and Norway.

In the following we bring a slightly edited report written by Volker Greifenhagen, former president of the Lutheran Student Movement-Canada. Peter Weiderud - a young journalist from Sweden - has expressed his strong reaction to the conference. Eckehart Lorenz of the Department of Studies and who was the coordinator of the conference, gives a brief response.

REALPOLITIK VERSUS UTOPIANISM by F. Volker Greifenhagen

"How can I come to agreement with these conservative people who see peace movement as a greater threat to peace than nuclear weapons?" said a Swedish youth delegate half-way through a consultation on the "Coordination of Lutheran Efforts for Peace" convened by the Lutheran World Federation Department of Studies 5-12 July, 1982 in Chavanod, France. The consultation, planned in response to the perception that activities for peace in Lutheran churches are based on very diverse and to a certain extent opposing concepts, brought together some 35 Lutheran participants and observers from around the world. Among them were five youth delegates. The question of the Swedish youth delegate fairly well summed up feelings as the first part of the consultation came to an end.

From Shalom to Military Strategy

Speakers, followed by question-and-answer periods, occupied the first four days of the consultation. In the opening address, Dr. Hans Friedrich Weiss, theology professor at the University of Rostock in the GDR, pinpointed the Old Testament concept of shalom, which envisions peace and wholeness in all areas of life and is intrinsically connected with justice as a theological starting point. Although the New Testament, with its eschatological and Christological version of shalom poses some problems for a Christian concept of secular peace, the eschatological horizon of Biblical faith would at least indicate that for the Christian peace is a way of walking toward the peace promised by God at the end - a way of walking that is marked by the risk of the cross - by the willingness to overcome boundaries and bear sorrows.

More speakers followed, ranging from theologians to economists to military strategists. Especially memorable were: the characterization of the West German peace movement as a youthful, and therefore naive and idealistic, protest movement - a comment that particularly galled the youth delegates; the placement of the economic cause of armed conflict squarely in the capitalistic economic system; the observation that nuclear disarmament as a concept tends to overlook the real possibility of conventional warfare and the linkage between nuclear and conventional weapons technology.

The speaker-dominated first part of the consultation was capped by a panel discussion between a Swiss General and a West German expert on military security in Western Europe. A representative from the diplomatic mission of the USSR in Geneva was not able to participate as planned. These two military strategists took the position that the "utopian ideals of pacifistic groups are legitimate as far distant goals for humanity but must not be allowed to divert the present day political process". The only realistic strategy they foresaw was to establish and maintain a military equilibrium between the super-powers coupled with a step-wise and mutually verifiable reduction in military potentials. They brushed off the concepts of a weapons freeze or of nuclear weapons-free zones as ludicrous and unrealistic in the present situation - rather, in their view, it should be the duty of a country to prepare to help its citizens to survive a nuclear war.

By this time, the mood of the consultation had changed subtly. The youth delegate from Norway commented: "I came to the conference expecting a consultation on ethics and instead now find myself at a conference discussing security interests". Other participants were angered at what seemed to be the one-sided emphasis of the majority of the speakers on pro-Western and anti-peace movement positions.

A Broader Range Discoved

The mood improved when participants divided into small groups and discovered that amongst themselves they exhibited a far broader range of opinion. Discussion in the small groups centered mainly around an attempt to find an adequate definition of "peace" and "peace concerns" for the church. The problem tackled was largely one of how to relate the "peace of God" and "wordly peace", and, consequently, of how the church is to deal with members within its fold who hold opposing views regarding the method and manner of pursuing peace today. In general it was agreed that although the "peace of God" and "wordly peace" cannot be equated, the "peace of God" impels Christians to strive for "wordly peace".

There was a great divergence of opinion on what position the church should take vis-a-vis the peace movement, with the majority of participants favoring the church as a forum for both sides to meet in an open atmosphere of reconciliation rather than seeing the church taking one side or the other.

Peace for Whom?

A presentation by the Third World participants reminded those present at the consultation that the balance of terror between the superpowers may maintain "peace" in Europe and North America but fuels war and strife in the Third World, which has become the operational theatre for the tug-of-war between the superpowers. In the Third World, the miserable conditions of the majority of the population are perceived as much more of a real catastrophe than the threat of nuclear war.

Other than the recommendation of one group that the LWF sponsor a consultation of lawyers and theologians to discuss the role of international law in maintaining and furthering the cause of peace, the consultation came to an end without issuing a statement or coming to any definite conclusions. The consultation organizer, Dr. Eckehart Lorenz of the Department of Studies of the LWF, however, was quite pleased with the work of the consultation and saw it as providing valuable material for the churches in facilitating their peace work.

As a youth delegate from Canada, let me conclude with the following summary observations:

The Process of the Consultation

First, on the process of the consultation. Compressing all the speakers into the first four days of the consultation was too overpowering. Small group sessions should have been scheduled earlier and interspersed among the speaker sessions. This would have allowed participants to express their views freely and would have led to a more positive atmosphere.

The choice of speakers was somewhat one-sided. It was regrettable that further representation from the Eastern bloc was not made possible, but surely at least one knowledgeable speaker directly from one of the peace movements could have been obtained to counterbalance the presence of military and strategic experts.

Otherwise, I would congratulate the consultation organizers on a job well done. The arrangements and location were terrific, and it was certainly a congenial forum for meeting and exchanging views with Lutherans from around the globe.

Efforts for Peace

Secondly, on the coordination of Lutheran efforts for peace. It seems that a consensus on a definition of peace is of primary importance. When slogans such as "peace in freedom" and peaceful co-existence" are thrown around by the political forces of our day, when peace is connected with a particular concept of economic and civil liberty in one sphere and with the triumph of a socialistic order in another, the church must be very clear on what it means when it speaks of peace. Clearly, the church must not let the prevailing status quo set its agenda but must draw its vision of peace from the Biblical concept of shalom.

Shalom points to a definition of peace that goes beyond the mere absence of armed conflict to include justice and prosperity for all. Obviously, it is a much more difficult task to embrace this wider vision of peace, but Christians must always beware of the temptation to minimize the work for peace as the mere eradication of armed conflict.

Somewhat in the same vein, it is important that we do not allow the nuclear disarmament movement to close our eyes to the horrors and escalation of conventional warfare. The fear of a nuclear holocaust must not increase our tolerance for conventional warfare, for that would play right into the hands of the superpowers who even now test each other's strength by conventional war fought in the Third World, and who, in the face of a so-called deterrent peace, experience a boom in arms manufacture and export. The peace movement is susceptible to becoming a political pawn for either side if its vision becomes too narrow.

It is obvious that the church needs to adopt a broad definition of peace. The struggle for peace must be seen to take place on a multitude of fronts and to encompass a wide variety of individuals and groups with very diverse calls and vocations.

Realpolitik vs. Utopianism

Finally we come to the question of realpolitik versus utopianism. The predominant tone of the consultation was that of "realpolitik" - to look for realistic, attainable solutions within the limitations of the structure of the world today. The existential "angst" of the Europeans at Chavanoz who live on the traditional battleground of the superpowers, underscored the push for a realpolitik, which North Americans are able to put off more easily because they seem to be somewhat removed from the situation.

Realpolitik, in this context, means that one does not jump too hastily on the peace movement band wagon, but carefully discerns the directions set by faith as well as the signs of the times before opting for one side or another, or for any one side at all.

However, when all is said and done, the realpolitik talk of the military strategists must not be allowed to dominate the church's Biblical vision of peace. Ultimately, the church recognizes that the root cause of war is sin and therefore only God can bring an end to war. But if it is the firm conviction of the church that God will indeed bring an end to war and establish shalom peace, then Christians cannot do else but work actively towards this utopian vision which is the Gospel promise of their future. And so, all talk of "deterrence" and "security-interests" aside, it is the symbol of the wounded Lamb, of the suffering and yet victorious Christ, which must predominate in the church's work for peace.

Postscript

The Role of Youth Delegates

On the role of youth delegates at LWF gatherings. It appears that youth delegates are chosen quite haphazardously by the various LWF National Committees and that there is no consensus on the definition of a "youth delegate". I would suggest that, if LWF National Committees would receive requests for youth delegates early enough, a process of advertising, application and selection of suitable candidates could be initiated - a process that certainly is preferable to what seems to be the present system of casual appointment by patronage.

Youth delegates naturally come to an LWF event lacking the background and experience of the other delegates. Therefore, it seems essential that youth delegates be adequately briefed, perhaps by a member of their respective LWF National Committee, before attending an LWF event. This briefing should minimally include a thorough introduction to the structure and function of the LWF.

Although youth delegates now attend LWF events, the question of their true legitimacy in the eyes of the other delegates, and in the eyes of the organizers of the event, and indeed perhaps also in the eyes of the LWF member churches, still remains. To give one example - at the consultation in Chavenod, one of the small groups of about seven members, as originally constituted included three out of the five youth delegates and also two LWF staff persons who were not intimately connected with the consultation. The prognosis for that group was not particularly good and it was eventually broken up and redistributed amongst the other small groups. The question is whether an unconscious devaluation of the participation of youth delegates was the reason for the unbalanced representation in this one group and for its eventual demise.

THE PEACE MOVEMENT MORE DANGEROUS THAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS? by Peter Weiderud

The peace movement is a bigger threat to peace in the world than nuclear weapons are. This is my conclusion after having heard the speakers at the "Lutheran World Federation Consultation on Coordination of Lutheran Efforts for Peace".

I went to the conference with the hope to find some new visions and possibilities for the churches to work for peace and disarmament. I found a conference that was directed to discover the best way for the churches to support the security policy of NATO. I felt mentally raped. These are very strong words, but they actually describe how I personally felt after the conference.

As far as I can see there are two main reasons why the conference turned out in this way. Firstly, the targeted efforts of the organizers of the conference. The speakers chosen were of a special category. Under the veil of expert knowledge they seemed to be geared to conducting the discussions in terms of the cold war from a western point of view. Secondly, the distribution of the delegates to the conference. We were 18 delegates from the western countries, 4 from the eastern countries, and three from the so-called Third World. With such a lack of balance in the participation it was impossible to have a balanced discussion.

Among the speakers the imbalance was just as obvious. Ten of the speakers were from the West, two from the East, and one from the "Third World".

Most experts on security policies and armament issues are subjective. Analyses of these difficult issues are often coloured by the experts' points of view and their background. The speakers in Chavenod were no exception. An expert on armaments was perhaps the best example. His statements seemed to imply that nuclear weapons are not such a great problem after all. So far they have not killed anyone, and they have even prevented war. What he meant, in fact, was that shooting citizens of socialist societies when they try to escape to the West is a more acute problem.

The most frightening example was otherwise a theological professor. His task was to evaluate the peace movement on a theological basis. And so he did. He asserted that the peace movement in the Federal Republic is governed by a horde of anarchists and communists whose primary goal is not peace, but the overthrowing of western society.

As I have been active in the Swedish peace movement and did not at all recognize his rough generalisations, I felt that I had to ask him how he had obtained his experiences of the peace movement. And it turned out that he had not been present at any peace demonstration at all. He had formed his opinion of the peace movement by watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines, and discussing with his children and students. In Sweden I have been working as a journalist responsible for local news. In my job I have always felt impelled, whenever possible, to use first-hand information. Even if the topic of my article was nothing more than a new playground I would go there to see and form my own opinion. I consider this a necessity for the readers to have confidence in the newspaper and myself.

This is also the reason why I got upset when a professor and scientist at a world conference evaluated the peace movement without personally having seen it in action. I have difficulties in understanding how he, a scientist, could undertake the task of evaluating the peace movement.

This also implies criticism of the organizers of the conference. If the LWF expects a conference like this to be taken seriously, it has to avoid engaging speakers who base their discourses on feelings and second-hand information. This undermines the confidence in the result of the conference.

The unbalanced recruitment of the delegates must also be a target of serious criticism. It is, from many points of view, questionable to conduct a peace conference concerning East-West relations with such a predominance of western delegates. This cannot be explained by the fact that a number of eastern delegates did not receive visas for leaving their countries, since this must be a well-known fact to the LWF from the experiences of earlier conferences.

The group discussions largely centered on one of the few statements made by a Lutheran church on the peace issue, namely the Heidelberg Theses of 1959. The following statement introduces thesis no. 8:

"The Church must recognize participation in the attempt to safeguard peace in freedom by the presence of nuclear weapons as still being a possible Christian way of acting today".

I tried to get support for the opinion that the church should at least not accept nuclear weapons. The church has a prophetic responsibility and must therefore work for a peace that is more than just absence of war, a peace that means equal relations among states and people, that means economic and social justice, and above all a tolerable situation for all people.

Even though there is a long way to go - and we may never reach our destination - the church must preach, pray and work for maximum peace. In a world of nuclear weapons, maximum peace is impossible. Apart from the actual threat of nuclear weapons, the armaments race devours incredibly much money. These are costs that must be seen in relation to a world of starvation. If the church says yes to nuclear weapons, it can definitely not work for maximum peace with credibility. Instead, it has sold its soul to a traditional political security-oriented way of thinking.

In my interregional group there was no possibility whatsoever to get much response for my way of thinking. Instead, I felt looked upon as a suspect figure disturbing the general order.

What can then be learnt from the conference in Chavanod?

Firstly, the LWF must have a close look at its criteria for selecting speakers. If the LWF wants the Lutheran peace debate to move forward, the organizers of conferences must choose speakers who can contribute something new and visionary instead of having speakers caught in the traditional security-oriented way of thinking.

Secondly, the selection of delegates must be looked at. There are four groups in particular, that must get better representation: delegates both from the East and from the "Third World", and also women and youth.

With such changes it ought to be possible to find a balance so that the conference could be something else than a mirror of western countries' security policies.

Let us once again return to the conclusion I made in the beginning of this article: the peace movement is a bigger threat to peace in the world than nuclear weapons are. Asked if this conclusion was a reasonable result of a Lutheran peace conference, one of the organizers commented that it was at least not a preposterous one, as the peace movement operates only in the West. I still wonder whether that was meant as a joke or not.

A RESPONSE by Eckehart Lorenz, Department of Studies

Let me respond briefly to Mr. Weiderud's impassioned criticism of the recent LWF sponsored Consultation on Lutheran efforts for peace.

1. The organizers were also unhappy about the relatively weak Eastern European participation in the meeting. As Mr. Weiderud should know we had invited more than twice as many from those countries as finally came, and even a major speaker from the USSR failed to appear.
2. Another aspect of the matter, however, is that many of the people who did come did not support their national policies. For example, of 14 people from NATO countries seven spoke in one way or the other against NATO policies. This fact apparently escaped Mr. Weiderud's attention, too.
3. We regret that among the speakers at the meeting there was no one speaking as an official representative of an organized peace movement.
4. A report of the consultation is now in preparation for publication. Readers will soon be able to judge for themselves whether Mr. Weiderud's reactions were justified.
5. Meantime our feeling is that in the desperately serious and difficult problems that we meet in working for peace, emotionally charged appeals and condemnations do not help much. The world, and the church, need less, not more polarization.

YOUTH LEADERS' CONFERENCES IN ASIAMADRAS:

Under the theme DYNAMICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN ASIA some 30 youth leaders from India, Malaysia and the Philippines met in Madras August 3-13. After a day of orientation the participants were divided into two groups and spent a couple of days with different development projects. After returning to Madras they spent a week of conference where lectures and bible study sessions meant to touch some of the questions and challenges which the exposure during the first two days had provoked.

The following are some of the conclusions the participants arrived at:

Regarding society:

The basic underlying problems are the same, ie. exploitation and injustice exists in society or large denial of human rights, oppression and poverty.

Regarding church:

The consultation recognize the fact that the church is the primary and active agent of extending God's Kingdom on earth;

The Consultation sincerely feels that the Church is not doing all that is expected of it both scripturally and contextually;

As the Church is being controlled by a powerful few, the potential and talents of various people especially youth are being frittered away.

Regarding individual:

The individual created in the image of God, is blessed by God to live a life of wholeness so that he could be an active instrument in the mission of the Church;

But because of man's selfishness and the social evils, one is caught in, like dowry, caste, racialism, economic disparity, social segregation and injustices, the individual is reduced to a state of helplessness and does not find an answer to his problems.

Resolutions addressed to the Church:

Resolved to press for representation of youth at various levels of decision making and policy-making bodies of the Church;

Resolved to request the churches to analyze and evaluate the various development programmes and projects of the Church and to bring a change to its present approach so that it may bring about the expected social changes and betterment.

to the individual:

Resolved to unearth and pick up youths who show promise and give them opportunities to be leaders in responsible position even if it means the older ones have to step down;

Resolved to ask our youths to resist by every means the evil of giving and taking dowry and commit ourselves (members of the present consultation) to put this into practice;

Resolved to form National Youth Bodies where they are not existing (Phil) and reinvigorate the existing National youth bodies.

to the L W F:

Resolved to request the LWF to sponsor leadership development programmes annually within the sub-region;

Resolved to request the LWF to organize a consultation of this nature for fellowship and interaction within the EAST ASIAN REGION once every two years - within the sub-region and once every three years at all ASIA LEVEL.

TAIPEI:

Following the conference in Madras August 14-20 about the same number of youth leaders from North East Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Korea) came together in Taipei for a conference under the theme: WE BELIEVE AND SO WE SPEAK.

All participants had submitted a report on youth work in their church, and this became the basis for extended discussion and sharing on problems and challenges in youth work in the region.

In the following some of the conclusions from Taipei:

Leadership Development:

In order to strengthen our youth ministry we strongly feel the need to develop more youth leaders. Therefore we should initiate youth leadership programs and/or training camps.

These could be organized and held by a church for the youth leaders at a congregational level, or when it is possible held in cooperation among Lutheran Churches in order to better utilize resources and let more youth leaders benefit from such programs.

The Lutheran World Federation is requested to support and assist, especially in making resource persons available in such programs, i.e. travel support to persons coming from other countries.

Church Leadership and Youth:

We affirm the loving labour of our elder generation in the church, especially of the faithful pastors God has given us. At the same time we believe our churches must face the fact that many outstanding and dedicated young people in Asia have left the Lutheran church in discouragement to serve in other churches. We hope for more open and honest communication between youth and their pastors in a spirit of love of their church and her heritage, and that pastors can grow in understanding of the concerns of young people and openness to their suggestions. We hope both youth and their elders will acknowledge their unity of heart and purpose in the gospel. We recommend that retreats be held for representatives of the clergy and youth to increase communication and understanding, and also pastoral conferences be held to sensitize pastors to the great importance and opportunities of youth ministry.

Exchange Programs:

Young people have concerns for other cultures and countries and they have a genuine urge to obtain new knowledge. We are therefore eager and willing to exchange information with each other also by visiting each other's countries. We need exchange programs among the churches and through these we can make a great contribution to the future and the mutual understanding among people.

We therefore encourage ourselves to work in order to implement the idea of developing exchange programs - starting in this region. We understand by exchange program an exposure among youth in another church on a shorter or longer basis, and we define the purpose as being one of sharing and exchanging experiences, resources, knowledge and ideas, and also one of mutually strengthening our

youth ministry by learning and contributing. Exchanges should be thoroughly prepared in every aspect. He/she must be a mature Christian who has his/her involvement based on a profound understanding of Christian faith.

The program itself also has to be well prepared, and especially the financial aspect has to be clear to both parts beforehand.

We understand the contact persons selected as having a special responsibility in getting such programs going.

We request the Lutheran World Federation to give priority to this program by giving necessary assistance to the implementation of such exchange in the future.

Hymnal:

In order to share our cultural heritage in expressing our faith through hymns and Christian songs we resolve to make an attempt to gather hymns and songs from Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Taiwan - but also from outside the region - and publish them in the original language and English. Responsible for coordination of this project - Hudson Chung, Hong Kong.

AN EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITY!!

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The Youth Newsletter can serve as a forum for exchanging ideas about serving the church.

Andy and Sherry Rishel from the USA are a couple interested in serving the church abroad. Information about their interests and experience is listed below.

Please contact them directly if you are interested in such an exchange or have suggestions for them as they seek to serve in this way.

THANK YOU!

Andy and Sherry Rishel

Seeking church service abroad from 6 to 24 months beginning spring, 1984. Quite flexible in location and type of service, however, would prefer Europe.

Ideally, we are interested in finding a couple with similar intentions as our to exchange church duties and living quarters.

Andy L. Rishel: Born March 28, 1957. Education with emphasis on business, accounting and typing. 2 years study in German. Work experience: employed for past ten years in automotive service, particularly light truck driving, with limited mechanical skills. Also, employed as bookkeeper for same business. Interests: photography. Church service: currently active in small Lutheran Church in America parish, serving as youth group advisor (15 students, ages 12 to 15). Also sunday church school teacher (ages 11-12).

Sherry M. Rishel: Born June 9, 1959. Education: with emphasis on art and business. Work experience: 2 years restaurant work, currently employed as bookkeeper in a department store. Interests: religion, art, gardening. Church service: currently serving in LCA parish as sunday school teacher (ages 8-9). Also church council member, stewardship chairperson, and some experience conducting worship services.

Address: Mr. and Mrs. Andy L. Rishel
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YOUTH IN STAVANGER

During the preparations for the "Interregional Consultation on Mission and Evangelism" it was indicated that the venue, Stavanger, on the southwest coast of Norway, might become a new name on the mission history map. Whether or not that expectation will be fulfilled remains a question. However, the consultation managed to produce, instead of easily forgotten statements which conferences in recent years have left for files and bookshelves, a letter - the "letter from Stavanger". This letter was meant to go out to churches and congregations - to share something about the theme of the consultation: MISSION and EVANGELISM. We print the letter in its English version and will try to bring the French version in the next issue.

Some have praised the letter while others have given it harsh criticism. We forward the letter since it was also meant as a letter to you, and we expect a response from some of you. Such responses become a very valuable, and necessary feed back from the youth constituency who were, together with the women, very poorly represented at the consultation.

The consultation which took place in Stavanger May 18-26, 1982 gathered about 130 participants. Among 95 delegates, only about 20% were women or youth, which is not a very impressive fact when one thinks of who is actually involved in mission and evangelism at the grassroots level.

Though "youth" was sometimes mentioned during the conference as "one frontier of mission", one of the few who touched upon youth and the contribution of youth to the mission of the church, was Dietrich Mendt from the German Democratic Republic. He spoke on the topic "Frontiers of Mission and Evangelism". Since he devoted one part of his lecture to the particular role young people have played in the churches in the GDR, we think it worthwhile to reprint that part of his lecture. (see following)

YOUTH PARTICIPATION:

Youth were represented at the consultation - though, in number, quite below the goal that had been set by the preparatory committee. It had originally suggested 12 delegates be young people. In the end, churches who had been invited to send youth or include youth in the delegation did not do so - for various reasons. Among these were both the Church of Norway and the Church of Sweden, which both had been invited to send several delegates since the consultation took place in Stavanger - but neither was able to come up with a youth as one of their official delegates.

However, a group of 7 young people representing the US, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and South Africa participated. In addition, LWF intern Hans Christoph Hermes participated (and since completed his internship). Most of these gathered in Oslo for a few days of visitation and discussion. The program in Oslo included briefings on the Norwegian church and mission organisation, visits to the theological faculties and some discussion on LWF youth involvement as well as the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in 1984.

The last day in Oslo was May 17th which is the Constitution Day in Norway and thoroughly celebrated. This experience probably explained why every Norwegian has a tendency towards chauvinism. At least it became a colorful conclusion of the few days in Oslo when also the weather fully cooperated to make the stay a pleasant experience. Then on to more serious business in Stavanger.....

Lynn Allan from Canada shared her impressions in a report. Some quotations from this would give an idea of how Stavanger was experienced:

"Stavanger provided an opportunity for people like myself to meet and share experiences about mission work in our own countries and faith in general. This kind of interaction whether it took place in small groups, plenary sessions or over the dinner table was a highlight for me. I saw how similar people really are, no matter where they are from. Each of us faces similar types of problems in dealing with mission and evangelism simply because we are dealing with people. My understanding of methods for approaching people was enlarged by being able to discuss and share with people who have spent many, many years in this work. The lectures and discussions were both interesting and boring."

"What I heard over and over again is that all of us need to listen to people and see how the gospel reaches each particular situation. This is in opposition to carrying our version of the gospel to them and forcing it upon them. We cannot be arrogant and assume that before we arrived on the scene, Christ was not present and working. He is everywhere, always - we do not bring Him as a present.

I found it frustrating that people were so defensive of their positions. In small and large groups people were defensive when their methods were criticized. I kept asking myself - how will we ever change our methods if we continue to be so defensive? Change occurs when we are open and allow the spirit to work."

"Conferences must be careful not to cause burnout in the participants. I found the days too intensive, too structured. It is not realistic or productive to have sessions morning, afternoon and evening."

"I found it frustrating that the language was more often than not sexist. I can understand that with the language differences it is bound to occur. However, anything on paper should be worded such as to include those women present who feel angry because of the inconsideration. There is no excuse anymore for sexist language."

"Try and include more youth and women in future conferences. Both were in the minority."

TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPEL INTO POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING PEACE

(From lecture by Dietrich Mendt, G.D.R.)

It is not necessary to waste words on the fact that the problem of peace has become problem number one for us all: Europeans and Asians, black and white, but also Lutherans and Catholics. Manifestly the danger is intensified in heavily populated Europe with its short distances and the gigantic stocks of weapons stored there.

- For years the Protestant churches of the GDR have been working on problems of peace, in an abstract and theoretical way. They have responded to various initiatives of the World Council of Churches, such as the Program to Combat Racism, and they have their own department for peace research in the shape of the Theological Study Department of the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR. On the whole, it has been good for us to know we live in a country as little interested in war as we ourselves are and which considers peace as in fact a necessity of life. Admittedly there had been tensions at various points on certain issues - especially on problems of educating children and young people for peace. The churches have often pointed out that education for hatred is incompatible with the Christian conception of peace. But on the whole, these tensions did not assume dramatic form.
- Now, however, we are confronted with the astonishing fact that young members of our churches, born in the early years after the Second World War, who have therefore never known war themselves at first hand, have suddenly discovered and begun to put into practice their own independent responsibility for peace. They proposed an alternative to military service which would at the same time meet a fairly acute need in our society, namely, the shortage of personnel in nursing services for mentally and physically handicapped people and the aged. This alternative service would clearly have been at the same time a special contribution to peace (the construction units attached to the national conscript army which make it possible to serve without bearing arms are for the most part necessarily concerned with military objectives, which often presents problems for many young people). Young people, moreover, began to sport a badge designed to promote so-called "Peace Decades". The badge showed the famous Soviet peace memorial presented by the USSR to the UN, and which is located in front of the UN headquarters in New York and in front of the Tretjakov Gallery in Moscow. The sporting of this badge led to serious confrontations with the government which feared that an independent and possibly organized peace movement was coming into being here, outside government control. This objection was devoid of all substance. But this initiative enabled the church, i.e. young Christians, to reach non-Christians. In other words, they succeeded in translating the Gospel in a relevant and intelligible way for our present situation. In doing this the young people had assumed or rather forced the church to assume a responsibility which the latter had neglected. The whole church proceeded then to back up the campaign initiated by its young people and tried itself to develop and translate what its own young people had already given to it.

LETTER FROM STAVANGER (English version)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from Stavanger, Norway. We are a group of more than 140 women and men from Lutheran churches in 34 countries. The Lutheran World Federation brought us together to study questions of mission and evangelism. We are for the most part a gathering of mission professionals, more men than women and more clergy than lay persons. That is one of the reasons for writing to you, to invite you to take a critical look together with us into the future of the Christian mission.

We have been telling each other about many things during these days:

In many countries congregations are growing. Groups of Christians are proving to be a "salt" in confessing their faith and in working to change unjust situations, for example in South Africa, Namibia and Latin America.

We have learned that the church in China is very much alive.

We have heard of the suffering of our friends in Ethiopia and of the continued growth of the church there.

We have learned of the growing efforts of Christians for peace throughout the world, in some cases at great cost to themselves.

But we have also heard that:

In many once strongly Christian countries the witness of the church has declined.

Many people are only nominally Christian.

Others exercise their faith in church on Sunday, but live without it from Monday to Saturday.

Daily we hear threatening news of war in the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and in Iran and Iraq, of the conflicts in Central America, Southern Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East, and of the tensions in Poland.

This is a long tale of suffering, destruction and unrest. In this situation we write to encourage you and ourselves.

THE MISSION OF GOD GOES ON

Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, to whom is given all power in heaven and earth, walks with us every day. He leads us toward the fullness of his kingdom where truth, justice and peace reign. He is our Light, although he is hidden. Again and again he steps out of this hiddenness to give us a glimpse of his glory. This happens in the proclamation of his word of forgiveness in all our congregations, in the life of a house church, in the baptism of a new Christian, as we gather around the Lord's table, or as we share with one another or engage in public witness. These are the things we have to keep on talking about. We have to tell these things to one another in order to strengthen our faith and to keep our hope alive so that we can serve him in the midst of our world. He has justified us by his grace. Our life belongs to him! So often we cannot live together in peace because we cannot accept each other as God has accepted us! Let us speak of these things also to the many people who have not yet heard God's good news!

GOD'S MISSION "TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH" CONSISTS OF BOTH WORD AND DEED

To follow Christ in his mission means to be his disciples in word and deed. We have a lot to learn:

Only one-fourth of the world's population is Christian. Millions of people have never heard anything of the gospel! We must continue to be missionaries where we live and to send missionaries both to those who do not have the good news of God's love in Christ and to those whose faith has to be rekindled.

Words alone or actions alone are not enough. Jesus preached and he healed. In Christ we recognize how hypocritical it is to speak about the "Bread of Life" and at the same time ignore physical hunger. And in him, we understand how inadequate it is to be concerned about bread for the hungry if we neglect to proclaim and confess the name of Jesus Christ so that the hungry may come to faith in him and be saved.

Our life itself is a sermon. The risen Lord is already present in our actions when he acts through us by the Holy Spirit and not only when we talk about him. No power in the world can limit this kind of sermon. When Jesus suffered, died and rose again he preached the clearest sermon of all.

The life of our congregation is a sermon, too. Does our fellowship at the Lord's table invite others to share in our community? Do all the resources of our congregation, including its property, benefit others? Are Christians enabled to become witnesses at their place or work, in their neighborhood, and everywhere Christ is not known? Is our congregation a place where life and work are grounded in the word of God? Is our congregation a place where we can really talk with each other as well as with people who are different from us?

THE MISSION OF GOD REQUIRES THE COOPERATION OF ALL

Cooperation in mission is essential to the life of all congregations. We are faced with critical situations and the survival of the world depends on the responses. All these situations reflect our failures and our alienation from God:

The tensions between East and West, and the folly of the nuclear arms race.

The imbalance between the rich and the poor, within and between nations, and a lack of understanding between North and South.

The concerns and needs of the disabled, refugees, unemployed, alcoholics, drug addicts and oppressed or outcast people.

The burden that there are people everywhere who have never heard the gospel or have forgotten it, or have not yet accepted it.

We need each other for the mission in God's world. We need the partnership of all denominations. We need partnership between church and church, local congregation and local congregation. Reflect on these matters with us! Talk with one another and write to us about your hopes, your experiences, your needs or your problems. Join us in our commitment to consciously ask every day: "How have I prayed for and participated in God's mission with the talents and resources that God has given me?"

God's kingdom comes. God's promise is sure. Let us walk in faith with Christ our Lord, who said: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16).

The Interregional Consultation on
Mission and Evangelism

THE LETTER IN OTHER LANGUAGES.

The "Letter from Stavanger" is also available in French, German and Spanish version. If you are interested in having it in one of these languages, just drop us a note and we will mail it to you!
(Eds.)

FRONTIER INTERNSHIP IN MISSION

Frontier Internship in Mission is an ecumenical international mission programme. Currently, they are looking for a young theologian from Africa, who has studied comparative religions or who has working experience in dialogue among religions, to take up an internship in Bangalore, India, with the Student Christian Movement of India.

It is a 2-year project and the work involves organizing regular dialogue sessions in student groups and workshops and conferences on the regional and national level.

Persons between 20-30 are eligible to apply, at this address:

Frontier Internship in Mission
27, Ch. des Cretes de Pregny
1218 Grand-Saconnex
Geneva, Switzerland

TEXT FOR THE PHOTOPAGES (15-17).

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Page 15: FROM OSLO & STAVANGER, MAY 1982.

- From the top: 1. Local youth choir infusing the Stavanger consultation with new inspiration.
2. Youth Adviser to DCC, Timothy Chere from South Africa making a point with Hans Christoph, FRG, listening.
3. A happy moment with the Mayor of Oslo, Albert Nordengen, in the city hall.
4. Per Anders Nordengen, student pastor and local coordinator for Oslo visitation, demonstrating love for ice cream - together with James Yagi, Papua New Guinea.

Page 16: YOUTH LEADERS CONFERENCE IN MADRAS, AUGUST 1982.

- From the top: 1. Enjoying a Sunday afternoon and freetime at a beach near Madras. India.
2. Bible study leader Dhyandchand Carr stressing a point.
3. Youth Director of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India and the local coordinator of preparatory committee, Augustine Jeyakumar.
4. Arriving to consultation with expectations.

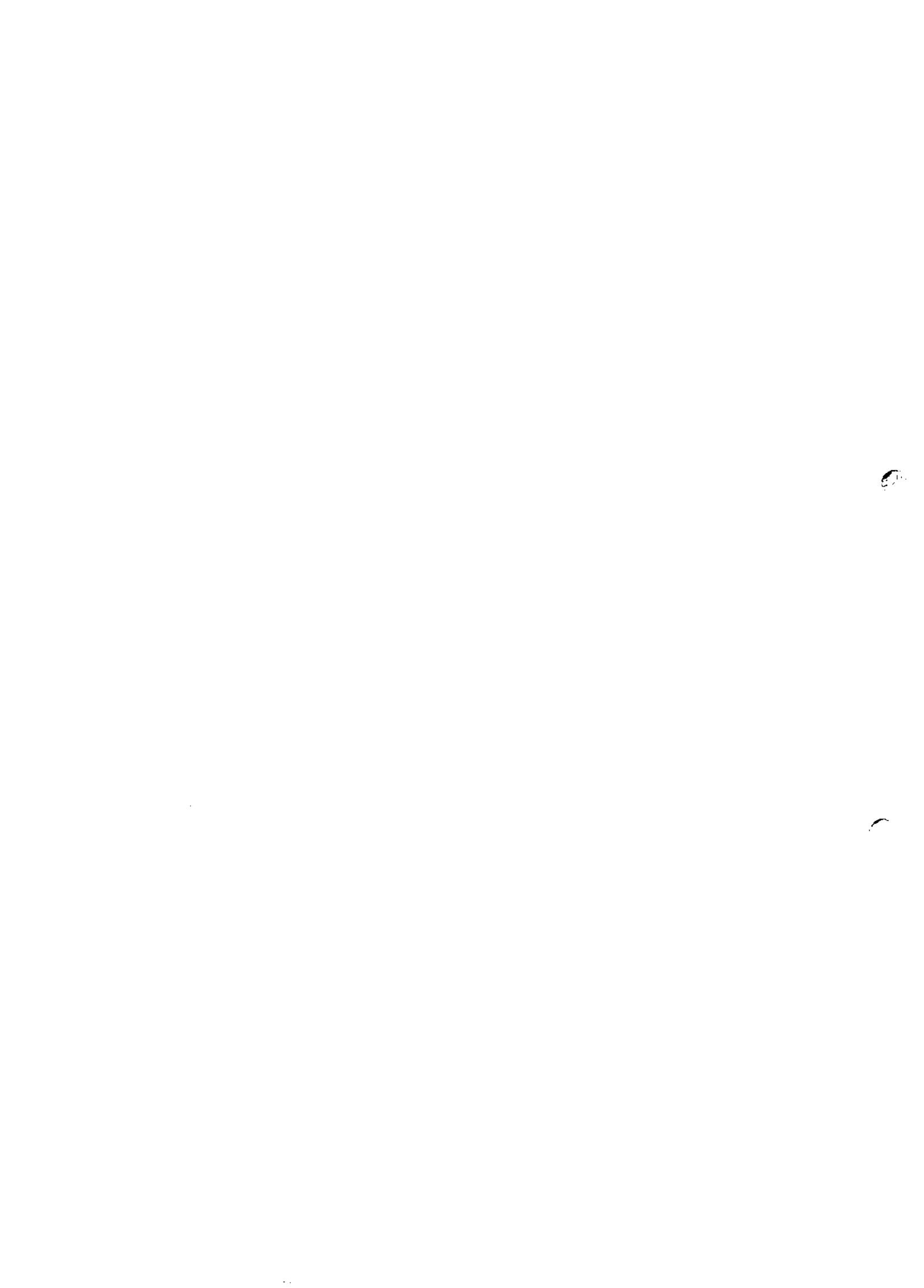
Page 17: YOUTH LEADERS CONFERENCE IN TAIPEI, AUGUST 1982.

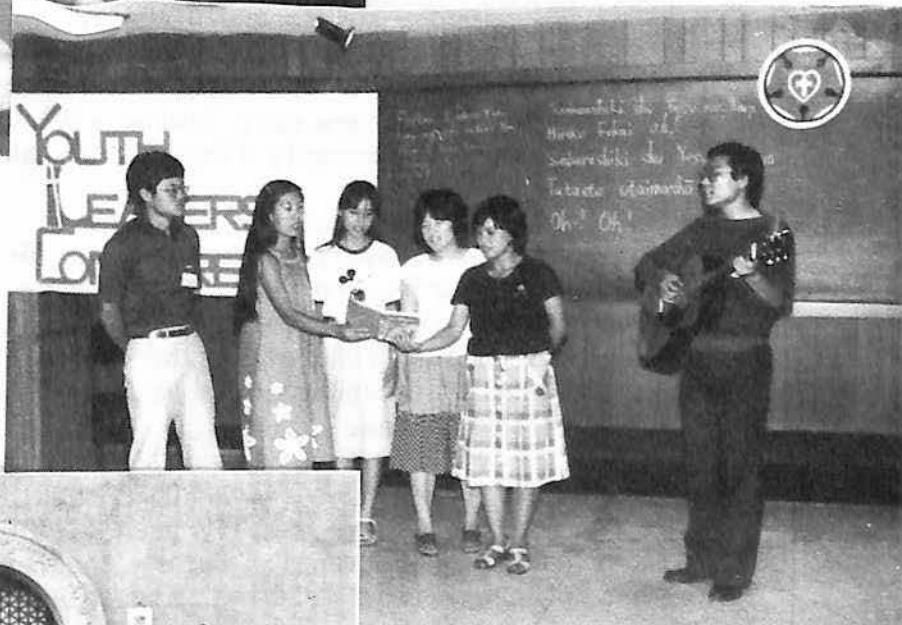
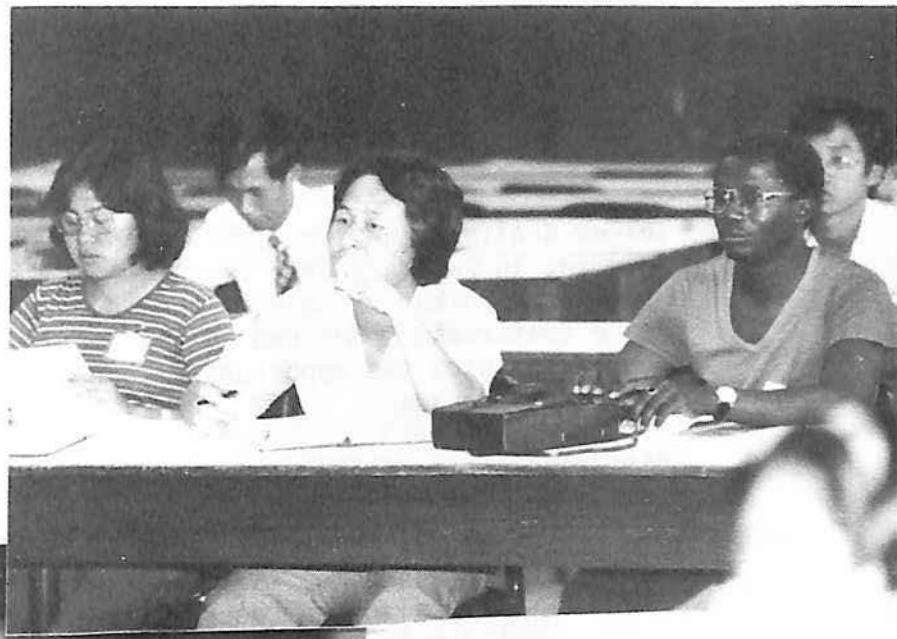
- From the top: 1. Representatives from Hong Kong, Korea & South Africa listening carefully. (Also two youth leaders from South Africa were invited to the conferences in Asia, but managed to get visas only for Taiwan.)
2. Bible study leader Choong Chee Pang in one of his sessions on the theme "Youth in Mission".
3. The Japanese group performing.
4. Almost the whole group posing outside the National Museum in Taipei.











LUTHERAN STUDENT MOVEMENT IN CANADA

Volker Greifenhagen, the 1981-82 chairperson of the Lutheran Student Movement in Canada shared recently from his experiences with the Movement. Volker was one of the young people invited to attend the peace conference sponsored by the Department of Studies in July. Youth Newsletter used the opportunity to have him share some information about the LSM in Canada.

His description of the LSMC included the following:

One of the characteristics of our Lutheran Student Movement in Canada (LSMC) is the worship life. And for us worship usually also includes celebration of the Eucharist. Every week the student groups -- often somewhere between 10 and 20 students -- gather for worship and for supper afterwards. This can be combined with a study session or some sort or just a social program.

Volker described the first National Convention in which he participated ten years ago as a sort of revival for the Lutheran Student Movement in Canada. (That year he began serving on the National Coordinating Committee and has since served in various capacities.) The radicalization of the 60's had resulted in a dramatic decrease of students coming to the National Conventions. Then a sudden and dramatic increase in participation occurred, creating a sort of rebirth of the Movement and bringing with it some changes in emphases. The emphasis on social justice and involvement was still left, but became more linked with worship life. "And now those two emphases are inseparately linked," insists Volker.

As evidence of this balance in emphases, Volker pointed to the fact that the Movement, at every Convention, decides on special projects to be carried out during the year. These have often included fundraising projects for Africa or Latin America, but always with the projects aimed at more than just fundraising for the student groups involved. One important aspect of these projects has been the deepening awareness among the students themselves.

The 1981-82 project, called PROJECT NORTH/NAMIBIA, combined the two dimensions which have usually been part of the projects: the international and the national. During the last two years an attempt has been made to choose two "matching" struggles.

Volker described the 1981-82 project in this way:

We have combined the struggles for a land claim settlement going on in the northern part of Canada and the struggle of the people in Namibia.

(continued next page)

Lutheran Student Movement in Canada (cont.)

We have a two-fold purpose in choosing Project North and Namibia: 1) Since Namibia is far away we think that by matching it with a struggle that is closer to us, it is easier to understand the Namibians in their situation. And 2) By comparing what is happening in the north of Canada with the openly unjust situation in Namibia we may gain some help in understanding our own situation more clearly.

A packet was developed in order to help the student groups work on the project. The packet has since been revised, in response to criticism from the student groups and an interest on the part of outside groups. Volker, in referring to the packet, said: "We feel this may be our contribution as a student movement to our present situation."

The LSMC is autonomous -- in no way locked into a church structure, although it has very good contacts with the Lutheran churches in Canada. The student groups also work in close cooperation with the student chaplains who are appointed by the churches. One chaplain serves as advisor to the National Coordinating Committee -- otherwise all positions within the Movement are held by the students themselves.

The Movement, in its National Convention last year, voted to temporarily withdraw its membership in the North American Regional Committee of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), due to various circumstances. The situation in relation to the NARC may change, however, making it possible for the LSMC to resume its association with the WSCF. Meanwhile, the LSMC is also looking for contacts with other Lutheran student groups and, in general, is seeking to deepen its international Christian relationships.

* * * * *

YOUTH INTERNSHIP.

The Department of Studies of the Lutheran World Federation is presently seeking an intern from AFRICA for their Unit II. Since the intern (age limit 30) will relate not only to the Office of Christian Education, but also to the Women's Desk, female candidates will be preferred. It will be about a one-year internship starting as early as possible in 1983.

For more information write to: Dr. Y. Ishida,
Director, DS, LWF,
P.O. Box No 66, 150, route de Ferney,
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

And share a copy with the Youth Desk!

INTERNS GO AND COME - by Alf Idland

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Matthias Schmale from the Federal Republic of Germany was not an intern under the so-called youth intern program of the Lutheran World Federation, but an assistant to the English editor of the Lutheran World Information. However - without being obliged to take a strong interest in the work of the Youth Desk which was established during his time in Geneva (June 81 - July 82) he volunteered to contribute, especially in developing the Youth Newsletter. It is no exaggeration to say that much of the improvement and expansion of the newsletter has to be credited to Matthias - who together with Hans Christoph Hermes (see the June issue) did a great job in order to put the newsletter together. The keen interest in the development of the work of the Youth Desk - shown by both Matthias and Hans Chirstoph - was a real asset as I came here to start my work at the Youth Desk last year.

Jeffrey Nellermoe from the US, who replaced Matthias, arrived in September. Jeffrey is a recent graduate in German and will begin his theological education after completing a year with the Department of Communication.

A new youth intern to the Department of Church Cooperation, Joan Löfgren, arrived at the end of September. Joan, who comes from the US and has been working 2 years with the Lutheran Church in America, will relate closely to the Youth Desk during her internship. One of her tasks will be to cooperate in the editing of the Youth Newsletter. She will also be much involved in the preparatory work of the youth gathering in Budapest prior to the General Assembly of the LWF. Just after her arrival here she had to jump into the preparations for the preparatory committee meeting which took place here last month. Good luck to Joan as she tries to survive sharing office with the youth coordinator.

YOUTH DESK NOTES - by Alf Idland

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The notes will have to be very short this time due to lack of space in this issue. Most of the events that the youth desk has been involved in, are reported on in various forms - including pictures - as you realize. One of the major items that I had promised to report more on in this issue, is the preparations for the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering. Since the preparatory committee was established and finalized by the end of the summer and had its first meeting here in Geneva, October 16-23, the next issue - hopefully out before the end of the year - will focus on the committee and its work last month.

APOLOGY!

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We have to apologize that our last issue, No. 8, June 1982 did not contain anything about who was publishing this newsletter, which should not be interpreted that we hesitate to take responsibility for this publication - on the contrary, considering the words of appreciation for the newsletter that have reached us via various channels, we are very eager to take credit for it. As we also did when some confused people in the house tried to trace the origin of this unspecified youthful paper.

Some of our readers - having been put on the mailing list just prior to our last issue was publisehd - were probably even more confused and spent some time guessing who had landed in their postbox. Again - we apologize for the oversight.

YOUTH NEWSLETTER ART COMPETITION

Are you an artist or would-be artist? We are seeking a new design for the cover of the Youth Newsletter, preferably from one of our readers -- it could be YOU.

Anything and everything will be considered -- as long as it includes "Youth Newsletter" somewhere in the design.

WHO may submit a design? Anyone receiving the Youth Newsletter who is in the 17-30 age range.

WHEN should designs be submitted? Between now and January 15, 1983 (postmarked).

HOW will the designs be judged? By a panel of distinguished communicators and the Youth Desk staff.

WHAT is the prize for the winning design? A trip to Geneva for visits at the LWF offices and the possibility of further art work for the 1984 Budapest Youth Gathering.

WHERE should designs be sent? To the Youth Desk, using the form below.

GOOD LUCK!

* * * * *

Youth Newsletter Art Competition

Name _____

Address _____

RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR DESIGN BY JANUARY 15, 1983 to the Youth Desk:

Youth Desk
Lutheran World Federation
P.O. Box No. 66
Route de Ferney 150
1211 Geneva 20,
SWITZERLAND

YOUTH NEWSLETTER ADDRESS UPDATE

In an attempt to make the Youth Newsletter address list as accurate as possible, and to add new names whenever possible, we ask that you fill out the form below and return it to the LWF Youth Desk.

Sometimes Youth Newsletters are sent to old addresses and never forwarded; sometimes they are received and never read; sometimes those interested in receiving it aren't sure how to get on the mailing list.

So we ask that you fill out the form and return it as soon as possible. The sooner you send us the information, the sooner the Newsletter will reach its proper destination.

THANK YOU!!

* * * * *

Youth Newsletter Address Update

NAME _____

1) I have a CHANGE OF ADDRESS. My new address is:

_____ (street)

_____ (city/town) _____ (state/province/region)

_____ (country) _____ (postal code)

2) Please DISCONTINUE sending the Youth Newsletter to me.

3) Please ADD THESE PEOPLE to your mailing list.
(Use other sheets if necessary.)

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Return to: LWF Youth Desk, P.O. Box 66, Route de Ferney 150,
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.